



The Real Estate Informer

From Bernard Gibbons, "The English Agent"
Alain Pinel Realtors, 588 San Ramon Valley Blvd., Danville, CA 94526



Happy New Year from Bernard Gibbons



It's no secret that 2006 was not a good year for home sellers, although on reflection, it was nowhere near as bad as was predicted by many.

Sure, many homeowners saw the value of their property decrease but this was inevitable given the recent rate of increases. The question was not "Will home prices fall?" so much as "When will home prices fall?". The escalating price increases over the past few years were unsustainable and the result was the correction we experienced in 2006. The good news is that the market did not crash. There was no bubble bursting as the press predicted and the worst now appears to be over. Anybody who bought a home over 4 years ago should realize a significant gain if they plan to sell this year and that will include the vast majority of home sellers.

So what will happen in 2007? Certainly homes will not be selling overnight with multiple offers. Those days are well and truly over. In order to achieve a sale within a reasonable time period (that is to say within a few weeks), sellers need to prepare their homes for sale, price them appropriately and make sure that they are represented by an agent with a strong marketing plan. We are back in a more normal market now. There are around one third less homes for sale than there were 5 months ago and interest rates are still very low by historical standards. All good signs for a more active housing market in 2007.

Featured Office Listings



San Ramon - 5 bed, 5.5 bath, 5000sf - \$1,969,000



San Ramon - 4 bed, 2.5 bath, 2340sf - \$1,259,000

This newsletter is for information purposes only and nothing herein is offered as advice. It is not Intended To solicit any properties currently listed for sale with a broker. All content is believed to be accurate but is not verified or guaranteed. E&OE.



"The crème caramel was possibly the best I have ever tasted..."

Reviews such as the one on this page are included as a service to introduce people to interesting restaurants in the San Ramon Valley. They should not be taken as any form of recommendation. We have no connection with any restaurateurs in the area and all opinions expressed are strictly those of the writer. Any comments or feedback is welcomed and encouraged.

If you have a particular restaurant in mind that you would like to see reviewed, please send me an email at bernard@bernardgibbons.com and I will do my best to oblige.

Restaurant Review: Alamo Creek, 3206 Danville Blvd., Alamo

This is a restaurant that is easy to miss and I wager that many of my readers have never even heard of it. Situated in a small shopping center on Danville Boulevard, directly across from where YardBirds used to have their store, Alamo Creek is tiny. With just 6 tables inside and a few more outside at the front, weather permitting, it is hard to see how they can actually have a profitable business.

Sylvia and I had our first visit to Alamo Creek on a Friday evening between Christmas and New Year. I am pleased to say that we had made a reservation as otherwise I would not be writing this column. This is not a well kept secret in Alamo and every table was booked.

Alamo Creek is a comfortable, neighborhood restaurant with a pleasant ambience and friendly, attentive service. On entering, we were greeted by the owner and given a table towards the back of the restaurant. Our waitperson introduced herself promptly and took our order for a bottle of wine (La Crema Chardonnay at a very reasonable \$26) while we perused the menu. We were also given a com-

plimentary appetizer of goats cheese topped with honey and a half walnut (very tasty!) and some delicious, crisp Middle-Eastern style flat-bread

All of the entrees come with a soup or salad and both of us went for soup. Mine was a carrot and cilantro while Sylvia chose leek and potato. Both were delicious, mine so much so that I determined to find a recipe for carrot and cilantro soup.

For a main course, Sylvia chose the day's special - roast duck with a cherry, honey and chardonnay sauce. I had the sautéed sea scallops, which were presented in a garlic and chardonnay sauce. Both dishes were served with seasonal vegetables (carrots and sprouts). Sylvia's duck came with mashed potatoes and my scallops with rice.

Neither of us could find anything to fault with our meals. Everything was perfectly cooked and seasoned and portion sizes were generous. The chef is obviously skilled in the use of herbs and spices and the use of garlic was also evident.

At this point it should be mentioned that Alamo Creek bills itself as a Mediterra-

nean restaurant with Middle Eastern influences. This explains the selection of desserts on offer that included baklava and crème caramel, two of my absolute favorite desserts. Regular readers will know that we rarely eat dessert but tonight we made an exception. Sylvia had the crème caramel (which I helped her with) and I had baklava.

For those unfamiliar with baklava, it is a middle eastern dish consisting of layers of filo pastry with almonds soaked in honey. It was excellent. The crème caramel was possibly the best I have ever tasted. Not at all sweet and absolutely delicious.

The cost of this delicious meal for two people including wine and tax—Just \$67. The value is outstanding.

Please remember that if you decide to try Alamo Creek, you really have to make a reservation. I even wonder if I should be telling you about it because if it gets too popular, I may not be able to get a table when I want one. So do me a favor - give it a try but let's keep it our secret. Don't tell your friends about it!

WHO DO YOU KNOW?

Who do you know that may be thinking about buying or selling a home this year? Much of my real estate business comes to me as a result of referrals from people just like you. If you know of anybody who may be thinking about making a real estate move this year, even outside the Bay Area, please let me have their contact details. I promise to treat them like family. Call me anytime on (925) 997-1585 or email bernard@bernardgibbons.com.

Market Update - January 2007



Real estate sales activity was slow in virtually all areas throughout 2006 for reasons that are easy to define. The superheated market that we experienced for the past few years came to a sudden end in the last quarter of 2005. Multiple offers became a thing of the past and home sales ground to a halt. Most sellers were unwilling to accept that buyers were no longer willing or able to pay the prices being asked for homes, so many sat on the market for a long time. As price is a function of supply and demand, a high level of inventory caused home prices to fall further and the only way to achieve a sale was to price your home at a lower price than similar homes were being offered at. Motivated sellers achieved sales. Less motivated sellers had homes sitting on the market for months and many just failed to sell.

Inventory levels peaked in September and have been steadily reducing since then. Amazingly, they have fallen by almost 50% in just the last 3 months.

Even so, sales have not increased noticeably. It is therefore apparent that the reduction of inventory is as a result of people failing to sell their homes and taking them off the market rather than them having achieved a sale. It can also be seen that the average sale price has fallen over the past few months, although perhaps not so much as one might expect.

Now lets take a look at some year on year figures. Rather than just looking at average sale prices of homes, let us consider average sales price per square foot. As can be seen from the table below, this reveals a telling story. Throughout much of 2005 home prices rose at an extremely high pace. This was the time when sellers were frequently achieving a sale within days of listing their homes for sale. And with multiple offers, all above the asking price.

Now, we have seen the inevitable correction. Alamo and

Lamorinda have shown resilience, the former having consistently increased in value. Danville and Walnut Creek prices have fallen back to 2004 / 2005 levels while San Ramon prices are even lower than they were 2 years ago. Although I haven't shown the figures here for the lower priced areas of Concord, Martinez and Antioch etc., I can state that prices in these areas have fallen even further, as a result of excessive inventory in these areas. But the worst does look to be behind us and we can probably look forward to a more stable time in 2007. Prices appear to be steady and we may even see a little growth but there will be no frenzied buying activity and buyers will be able to consider their options before deciding to make an offer on a home. This is what is supposed to happen in a normal real estate market. If you plan to buy or sell a home this year, I wish you every success.

The above information is all based on figures provided by the Contra Costa / Alameda MAX Multiple Listing Service. Opinions and conclusions drawn are those of Bernard Gibbons.

Interest Rate Update:

30 Year Fixed (Conforming) - 6.125%
 30 Year Fixed (Jumbo) - 6.375%
 (Source: Wells-Fargo - Dec 31st, 2006)

January Dates:

Jan 1 - New Year's Day
 Jan 15 - Martin Luther King Jr. Day

ARE YOU CONSIDERING SELLING YOUR HOME ?

If you are considering selling your home this year, please contact me as far ahead of time as you can without any obligation.

I will advise you how to prepare your home for sale so that you can get the best price in the time scale that works best for you. show you.

I will recommend and liaise with contractors if needed while preparing your home for listing it for sale.

I will show you what similar homes to yours have sold for recently and I will prepare a market analysis to help you to decide what price your home should be offered for sale.

I will let you have a copy of my Marketing Plan customized for your home that will describe exactly what I will do to get your home sold.

Call Bernard Gibbons any time on (925) 997-1585 and I promise I will do everything I can to make your move go smoothly.

Average Sale Price / Sq. Ft. - Detached Single Family Homes

	Alamo	Danville	San Ramon	Walnut Creek	Lamorinda
Dec 2004	440	392	375	402	463
Dec 2005	488	43	428	462	526
Dec 2006	514	408	364	439	521

SAN RAMON VALLEY MARKET UPDATE

Source: Contra Costa / MAX MLS

**The 40 most recently Closed Sales in Alamo, Blackhawk, Danville, San Ramon,
Walnut Creek, Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda**
(Sorted By City and Sold Price)

Address	City	Beds	Baths	Part Baths	SqFt	Lot Sq Ft	List Price	Sold Price
1470 Danville Blvd	Alamo	3	1	1	1277	672	\$515,000	\$480,000
3084 Lunada Ln	Alamo	4	2	1	3001	22512	\$1,369,000	\$1,376,000
94 Park Meadow Ct	Alamo	5	2	1	2562	15000	\$1,595,000	\$1,595,000
4 Danville Oak Pl	Danville	3	2	1	1678	0	\$599,000	\$585,000
81 Fawn Pl	Danville	3	2	1	1590	3008	\$699,000	\$715,000
159 Cameo Dr	Danville	3	1	0	1389	13440	\$749,900	\$725,000
226 Abigail Cir	Danville	4	2	1	2396	4000	\$799,950	\$799,950
826 Casita Ct	Danville	5	3	0	2828	25300	\$1,289,000	\$1,265,000
956 Janet Ln	Lafayette	2	1	0	1318	11562	\$780,000	\$780,000
1511 Sunset Loop	Lafayette	3	2	0	1631	7930	\$899,000	\$899,000
3966 Quail Ridge Road	Lafayette	4	2	1	3383	73620	\$1,850,000	\$1,812,500
421 Stonefield Pl	Moraga	3	2	0	1739	10000	\$875,000	\$860,000
250 Rheem Blvd	Moraga	3	2	0	1442	18949	\$889,000	\$850,000
6 Rustic Way	Orinda	4	3	0	2762	28749	\$1,690,000	\$1,666,500
162 Meadowood Circle	San Ramon	3	2	0	1311	3000	\$590,000	\$600,000
6352 Byron Lane	San Ramon	3	2	1	2171	0	\$672,400	\$645,900
9860 Brunswick Way	San Ramon	3	2	0	1530	8000	\$684,950	\$660,000
2928 Saint Denis Dr	San Ramon	4	2	0	1593	7280	\$695,000	\$740,000
105 Laredo Ct	San Ramon	4	2	1	1704	4950	\$699,000	\$685,000
3715 Norris Canyon Rd	San Ramon	3	2	0	1552	8000	\$709,950	\$680,000
6805 Aberdale Cir	San Ramon	3	2	1	1866	5300	\$734,950	\$720,000
9577 Davona Dr	San Ramon	4	2	0	1686	7125	\$739,000	\$716,000
513 Kinvarra Court	San Ramon	4	3	0	2365	4402	\$858,000	\$835,000
506 Fallen Leaf Cir	San Ramon	4	3	0	2614	5724	\$875,000	\$825,000
81 Brevensville Dr	San Ramon	5	4	0	3295	0	\$1,050,000	\$1,010,000
5231 Pembroke Way	San Ramon	4	3	1	3490	6000	\$1,085,000	\$1,221,900
136 Canyon Lakes Way	San Ramon	4	3	0	3089	8400	\$1,094,000	\$1,098,000
5012 Holborn Way	San Ramon	5	4	1	4005	6200	\$1,150,000	\$1,151,000
5218 Pembroke Way	San Ramon	5	4	1	4005	6600	\$1,198,000	\$1,329,900
2372 Keats Lane	San Ramon	4	3	0	3361	7349	\$1,199,900	\$1,064,956
117 Mediar Ct	San Ramon	5	3	0	3171	9610	\$1,399,900	\$1,283,000
2378 Keats Lane	San Ramon	5	3	1	4061	7267	\$1,404,062	\$1,404,062
3557 Ashbourne Circle	San Ramon	5	4	1	5083	20401	\$1,699,975	\$1,597,719
2560 Walnut Blvd	Walnut Creek	2	1	0	889	0	\$319,000	\$305,000
1315 Alma Avenue	Walnut Creek	1	1	0	595	0	\$335,000	\$335,000
185 Sierra Dr.	Walnut Creek	2	1	0	790	0	\$348,000	\$330,000
2728 Oak Rd	Walnut Creek	3	2	0	1259	0	\$425,000	\$410,000
1570 Siskiyou Drive	Walnut Creek	3	2	1	2069	3500	\$699,000	\$690,000
443 Gentry Ct	Walnut Creek	4	3	1	3210	14000	\$1,295,000	\$1,290,000

How much did that home down the street sell for? For more detailed information on home sales anywhere in Contra Costa or Alameda County, call Bernard Gibbons on (925) 997-1585 or send an email to Bernard@BernardGibbons.com